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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN

Summary: As the major Chinese-language Taipei dailies continued to cover the contentious Law on National Assembly's Exercise of Power and other issues relating to local politics May 27, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, carried a news story on page four that headlined: "Bian: Both sides [of the Taiwan Strait] can resume talks as long as Taiwan's sovereignty is secured." The sub-headline added: "With regard to the United States' concern about 'both sides of the [Taiwan] Strait, one China,' [Chen] has given orders to clarify to the international community that '[Taiwan] is willing to promote cross-Strait dialogue on the basis of the 1992 [Hong Kong] talks.'" A front-page news story of the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" also said: "Bian broached the new Taiwan-centered consciousness again," with the sub-headline: "[Bian] emphasized [the importance of] 'protecting Taiwan' and creating a new situation of cross-Strait and in-house reconciliation." Commentator Lai I-chung, director for foreign policy studies of the Taiwan Thinktank, noted in a commentary (Part One) of the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" that the meetings between Chinese President Hu Jintao and KMT Chairman Lien Chan and PFP Chairman James Soong have altered the strategic equation between Washington, Beijing and Taipei. End summary.

"The Strategic Equation between Washington, Beijing and Taipei Is Altered Because of the Meetings between Lien, Soong and Hu - Part I"

Lai I-chung, Director for Foreign Policy Studies of the Taiwan Thinktank, commented in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] (5/27):

"The trips of [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan and [PFP Chairman] James Soong to return to China, which have created disturbances [on the island] for nearly a month, have finally come to an end. This drama of the absurd jointly performed by [Chinese President] Hu Jintao, [President] Chen Shui-bian, Lien and Soong, plus Washington's comments on this issue several times, which sounded almost like a strategic idiot, have cast a big shadow over Taiwan's democratic development. As for the triangular relationship between Washington, Beijing and Taipei, the United States has lost its leadership over the current status in the Taiwan Strait. Hu became the biggest winner, whereas Taiwan is the biggest loser in the triangular relationship. .

"What is worse is that Lien has no guts, so he dared not to publicly mention 'one China, different interpretations' in front of Hu, and he even embraced Beijing's 'May 17 statement' issued in 2004. Soong was even worse; his recklessness drove him to raise complacently the new interpretation for the '1992 Consensus,' namely, the 'both sides of [Taiwan] Strait, one China' statement. His move has created an effect that is tantamount to the PFP endorsing Beijing's 'new syllogism toward Taiwan' and its definition of Taiwan's status.

"Soong attempted to argue irrationally that 'both sides of the Strait, one China' means 'both sides of the [Taiwan] Strait are free to interpret the one China.' But Hu has set the tune for this statement and determined that it means the 'one China principle,' which is the same as the second sentence of Beijing's new syllogism toward Taiwan: 'Taiwan and mainland China [i.e. both sides] belong to one China.' Soong has turned the ambiguous '1992 Consensus' into 'both sides of the Strait, one China,' and along with his position that opposes two Chinas, it means that Soong has acknowledged the connotation of China's new syllogism toward Taiwan, which claims that 'Taiwan is part of China.'

"The worst part is that such a statement is exactly the precondition laid down by China's 'Anti-Secession Law,' so it also confirmed some people's criticism against Soong and the PFP, saying they have endorsed China's 'Anti-Secession Law.'

"In the aftermath of the meetings between Hu, Lien and Soong, Hu can [now] easily release himself from the international community's backlashes against China's 'Anti-Secession Law' without costing him anything. All the more, he has successfully made Taiwan's two major opposition parties accept China's 'May 17 statement' and substantively acknowledge its 'Anti-Secession Law.' No matter whether Hu wants to talk with the DPP or not, a political force has taken root in Taiwan that echoes the Chinese Communist Party's policy toward the island. Judged by the current situation, what Hu will face in the future is not the general public view of Taiwan but the basis of social support for each individual political party. [In other words,] Hu has achieved his aim of isolating Chen Shui-bian. ."

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